

Clay Community Health Happenings

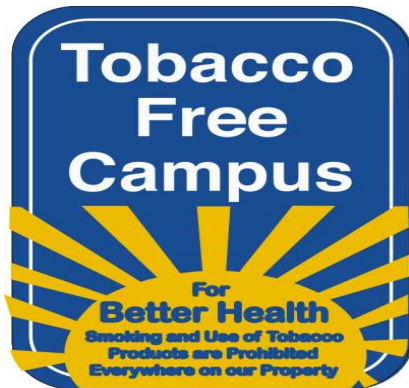
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904-529-2800

Clay County Health Department News

Tobacco-Free Schools



Members of Tobacco Free Clay and students from Clay County SWAT (Students Working Against Tobacco) urge the Clay County School District to support the adoption of a comprehensive Tobacco-Free Schools policy to protect Clay County youth from the influence of tobacco. Studies show that school tobacco bans are related to a lower prevalence of student tobacco use ONLY when the ban is strongly enforced and actively supported by teachers, coaches and school administrators.

"Our goal is to help the district understand that a strong tobacco policy covers students, visitors and staff alike, supports tobacco users in quitting, and includes adequate enforcement and motivation for law enforcement as well as school employees to help save the lives of our students by helping them avoid ever starting to use deadly tobacco

products," said Amber Greene, member of Tobacco Free Clay and representative of Northeast Florida Area Health Education Center (AHEC). "Any Clay County resident can take advantage of the Quit Smoking Now program, it's completely free. Just visit, www.NortheastFloridaAHEC.com to get started."

The important aspects of a Tobacco-Free School policy include prohibiting tobacco industry advertising, curriculum and contributions; eliminating tobacco use by all persons (including visitors) on all district property; encouraging tobacco use prevention education and encouraging tobacco cessation programs for faculty and staff.

This past June, Florida Governor Rick Scott signed an amended Florida Clean Indoor Air Act returning local control to a school district when it comes to regulating tobacco issues on district property. Tobacco Free Clay & SWAT members have earned the support of the Clay County Education Association and school board member Charlie Van Zant, Jr as champions for the cause.

For more information on tobacco prevention activities in Clay County, visit www.TobaccoFreeClay.com.

Rabid Dog – Clay County

Clay County Health Department (Clay CHD) recently reported a laboratory confirmed rabid dog. The dog was not vaccinated against rabies. Seven people have received post exposure shots for rabies prevention. This is the first rabid dog reported in Florida in 2011. Further testing is being done on the dog and we hope to identify the species (raccoon, bat, and/or fox) of rabies that infected this dog.

Rabies virus remains endemic in the Florida wildlife population such as raccoons, bats, and foxes. Between January and December 6, 2011, a total of 111 animals tested positive for rabies in the state of Florida. The majority of these were raccoons. Clay County has had 3 rabid animals for the same time period, 2 raccoons and one dog.

The Clay CHD reminds residents and visitors that the state of Florida, by law, requires vaccination of dogs, cats and ferrets. As long as there is wildlife rabies, domestic animals, such as dogs and cats, are at risk for rabies infection from these wildlife sources. Things you can do to prevent rabies infection and/or exposure are:

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- Have all pets current with rabies vaccinations.
- Secure outside garbage in covered containers to avoid attracting wildlife.
- Do not feed the wild or stray animals.
- Avoid contact with all wildlife, especially raccoons, bats, and foxes.
- If bitten or scratched by wild or domestic animals, seek medical attention and report to the Clay County Animal Control, 904-269-6342.
- If you have questions about pet rabies vaccinations, please call your local veterinarian.

SANTA, THANK YOU FOR THE CUTE PET!

'Tis the season for gift giving and pets seem like the perfect gifts for the holidays. The kids are excited to be pet owners and the adults have responsibilities to ensure the pet gets necessary vaccinations, check-ups, medicines, veterinarian (vet) visits, obedience classes, pet supplies, toys, treats, cleaning supplies, vitamins, grooming, and food, to name a few things.

According to information from veterinarians the average cost of owning a pet in the first year is as low as \$2,000.00 and as high as \$6,600.00. Over a period of 14 years the cost of a pet could be anywhere from \$12,500.00 to \$38,000.00.

Experts in the U.S. report 52.5-68 million dogs and 57 million cats are kept as pets in the U.S and each year 2 to 4.7 million animal bites occur. One out of very 2 people will be bitten by a dog or cat during their lifetime and children are the most frequent victims of dog bites.

In Florida, rabies vaccinations are required by law for pets (cats, dogs, ferrets). If your pet bites a person, the pet will need to be quarantined for 10 days and observed for signs of rabies infection. Quarantine/boarding of your pet will cost approximately \$200.00 and add the cost of a rabies vaccination and vet bills. If the quarantine period is 6 months, the expense of boarding would be from \$3,330.00 to \$5,040.00 and add the cost of rabies vaccinations and vet bills. If your pet stays outside and is not vaccinated against rabies, there is a possibility of exposure to wild animals that are high risk for rabies including raccoons, foxes and bats. In either instance it may be necessary to euthanize (kill) the pet and have it tested for rabies. People who are exposed to the pet through a bite or scratch would have to receive rabies shots. The cost of rabies shots does not include an emergency room visit or physician's treatment. In some instances healthcare insurance may or may not cover this treatment.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that human rabies deaths are rare. The estimated costs associated with rabies prevention and control in the U.S. exceeds \$300 million yearly. The cost of human life saved from rabies through prevention and control programs is estimated to be \$10,000 to \$100 million.

Clay CHD has recommended rabies shots for 27 people to date for 2011; estimated cost just for rabies shots is \$59,400. The number of people in 2010 was 31, \$68,200 and in 23 people in 2009 for \$50,600.

The Clay CHD and Clay County Animal Care and Control recommend you get the facts about pet ownership before buying a holiday pet such as a dog or cat. Pets provide a lot of love and companionship but come with responsibilities. Ensure the safety of your pet and others by completing the rabies shots and prevent bite injury.



Happy Holidays!